

Submitter: Judy Casper
On Behalf Of: Lincoln City City Council
Committee: House Committee On Housing
Measure: HB4123

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 4123
9, 2022

February

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 4123. My name is Judy Casper. I am serving in my 6th year as a City Councilor in Lincoln City. I currently serve as Council President. I am here to acknowledge the total and continued support that Lincoln City has for the pending Homeless Pilot Project for Lincoln County.

When I first came to the Council in 2017, several non-profit and faith-based organizations came to us with a proposal to address the homeless population. The Council had previously spent \$500,000 over a 10-year period to assist with the needs of various non-profit agencies. The outcome of their proposed concept fell short because there was never enough money or enough kind-hearted volunteers to run a program. After attempting to create coordinated efforts, the Council realized there was an obvious lack of coordination among these groups. In fact, some of the groups did not want to work with each other, under one umbrella of designated leadership. After continued unsuccessful attempts, a couple of non-profits were left to carry-on a limited number of outreach programs independent of each other. Meanwhile the number of families with children were adding to the number of homeless in Lincoln County.

In 2019 the Council took a leadership role by using their financial resources and entering into a partnership with Helping Hands Reentry Program to establish a Transitional Housing opportunity in Lincoln City. Even with all the pandemic blockades created from Covid, various groups within the County have been working diligently to meet their cities' homeless population needs.

Council sought more knowledge about how other cities were addressing issues; we felt there had not been sufficient communication about County services. Seeking a broader understanding of what County services were available, I volunteered to attend several Behavioral and Mental Health Advisory Committee meetings. Attending these meetings brought forth an awareness that there was a lack of coordinated resources and centralized communication, as well as a long-range plan among our County Services and providers.

We look forward to appointing a member from our Council to help establish and maintain an oversight board and develop a strategic plan. We enthusiastically want

to assist in the coordination and delivery of homeless services and successful best practices. It is vitally important to be able to provide feedback for the Legislature to develop policy and to create stability for the services provided. We are also ready to consider various ways to sustain funding for this project upon completion of the first two years. As community members and leaders in Lincoln County, we are ready to accept this responsibility to better serve our homeless population. We have been committed to partnering with service providers in the past and look forward to doing so in the future.

I urge you to support HB 4123 so that we might continue to address the challenges of homelessness in rural areas with the resources and flexibility to fit our specific needs. Thank you.